

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe*.

No. 137.—VOL. III.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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[The Editor of "Light" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

THE GOD-IDEA.

PART III.*

In a chapter on "The Abuse of the Word Atheism," the author of "Natural Religion" defines an atheist as one who "disbelieves in any regularity in the Universe to which a man must conform himself under penalties." This denial of cosmical law and order, this conventional living from hand to mouth without a thought of consequences, he finds in the modern Philistine, who has no higher idea than to shuffle in some slatternly manner through life, "the abject slave of details, who worships a humiliated, dissected, and abject deity, a mere Dagon. . . fallen flat upon the grundsell-edge, and shaming his worshippers." He finds him, in short, in everyone "to whom the Universe has ceased to be a scene of law, and has become an infinite litter of detail, a rubbishy heap of confused particulars, a mere worry and weariness to the imagination." I am heartily in sympathy with this idea. Such a man, be he altogether pious (as we say) and profoundly concerned with the fringes of religion, making broad his phylacteries and parading his super-eminent goodness, has no conception of law and order beyond petty details and gritty fact, crude and undigested, and is in essentials atheistic.

It is good that we inquire now, as the *Quarterly Review* does, how far this conception may rightly be called a natural religion. I shall find myself separated *toto cœlo* from the writer, who says that it is neither natural nor religious. I do not value highly his contention that "it is natural to man to look above Nature to some mysterious Power beyond it," for, though the Power may be behind, it is the presentation of that Power in the phenomena of Nature that will satisfy and content the highest and most developed intellect. The phenomenal manifestation of the Supreme may well engage the attention of man in this state of being without derogating in any way from the spiritual conception, which like all other spiritual things is spiritually discerned. Nor should I, for one, be greatly dismayed if such a study of what can be realised should replace the miserable logomachies, the infinite word-twisting, the fruitless speculations that have made ordinary theology a byword. The laws of our being, since we are here in this world, concern us more, and are of more truly

religious import, than the speculations of the schoolmen, even though they concern the abstruse problem, "How many angels can dance on the point of a needle?"

To deny the use of the word religion to this patient study of the works of the Supreme, and to grant it to the average belief of the unthinking religionist, is to the last degree absurd. It is beside the point to inquire to what conception of God—that X symbol that eludes and escapes all inquiry—this training leads. It may even lead to none. It may drive a man reverently to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: I cannot attain to it." Here at least, in this elementary state, he is humble enough to confess that he "cannot by searching find out God." Is he, therefore, less reverent or more misguided than the orthodox believer in a tinsel heaven and a lurid hell, who is cognisant of the whole mind of the Supreme; and whose beliefs and opinions are a hopeless jumble of blasphemy and folly? Far be it from me to pretend that Christian faith and practice is to be described fitly by any such appellatives. But, as a powerful writer has recently pointed out in these columns, popular Christianity is an unfortunately grotesque exponent of Esoteric Christianity; and an equally unfortunate burlesque of the simple doctrines of Jesus the Christ.

When all has been said, and said so well as our author says it, there must be, to the thoughtful mind, a sense of incompleteness and insufficiency in all human speculations as to these impenetrable mysteries. To the *Quarterly Reviewer*, the passage which I am about to quote sounds like a dirge over the wreck of the religious system, which has been so carefully elaborated, or as an epitaph written over the grave of some luckless infant that has barely survived its birth. Mr. Myers even complains that it "falls upon the reader with a shock of disenchantment." "Alas he cries, "this book is no exception to the rule, which bids the writer of every Theodicy break off his demonstration with some abruptness, when he reaches the question whose answer it concerns us most to know." To me, on the contrary, they breathe a dignified and pathetic beauty, which is all befitting in the man who, with hand however reverent, would venture to raise even a corner of the veil that enshrouds the throne of the Supreme. How can his dazed eye distinguish details? How dare he formulate in terms of an Athanasian creed mysteries that angels desire to look into! Better far, and more beseeming, the attitude of mind that feels itself too puny to be sure of anything, and yet that has within its grasp so much of truth as it can now contain. I would rather be the writer of the pathetic, yet sublime words that follow, than the author of a library of dissertations, penned from the platform of omniscience, respecting matters which are not for man to know. "The more our thoughts harden and deepen, as the universe grows upon us and we become accustomed to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance; the more contemptible become the pettiness, shortness, fragility of the individual life. A moral paralysis creeps upon us. For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice. We say, what matter if I pass: let me think of others! But the other has become contemptible no less than the self; all human griefs alike seem little worth assuaging, human happiness too paltry at the

* This must be read in connection with two previous sets of notes.

best to be worth increasing. The whole moral world is reduced to a point : the spiritual city, 'the goal of all the saints,' dwindles to the 'least of little stars'; good and evil, right and wrong become infinitesimal, ephemeral matters, while eternity and infinity remain attributes of that only which is outside the realm of morality. Life becomes more intolerable the more we know and discover, so long as everything widens and deepens except our own duration, and that remains as pitiful as ever. The affections die away in a world where everything great and enduring is cold ; they die of their own conscious feebleness and bootlessness. Supernatural religion met this by connecting love and righteousness with eternity. If it is shaken how shall its place be supplied ?" And what shame, I pray, is there if we bow our heads and say, How indeed ?

The passage I have just quoted is an eloquent protest against that irreverent and foolish habit which theology has fostered, and which I illustrated at the commencement of this series of notes by a quotation from the *Spectator*. I refer to the habit of regarding God as a Being whose mind and will are known to man, who can be said to deport Himself as man would, and who can fitly be spoken of under human limitations, and as animated even by human passions. It is against this anthropomorphism that "Natural Religion" deals a heavy blow : and so far as, in so doing, its author speaks in a strain of pathetic regret at the scantiness of his own knowledge, and the persistence of his own ignorance, his words ring with a truer note than do the arrogant assumptions of a universal knowledge that sit so badly on puny man, and are so ludicrously out of place in the very feeble creatures who alone pretend to possess this omniscience. To demolish such pretensions is in itself a gain, and a necessary step to the erection of a truer conception of a Diviner God, such as that which the higher Spiritualism reveals.

And where shall we look for that highest ideal ? Surely in no popular and consequently vulgarised system of religion ; but rather in the esoteric teaching which is the common property of all forms of faith. For some it is enshrined in the subtle conceptions of Esoteric Buddhism. Other minds not less reverent reach up through Nature to the Supreme Cause of all, to whom they are able to assign neither local habitation nor name, and whom they decline to comprehend within limitations of a human personality. For some again the phenomenal manifestation of Deity in the world of Nature is all-sufficing. But to a large section of Western thinkers who have penetrated beneath the external husk of the Christian system, their highest and noblest ideal will be found in the teachings of the Christ, and their most perfect exemplar in His own stainless and simple life. Their cry of adoring worship, "My Lord and my God" is the expression of the realisation of their highest ideal, of that which contents and satisfies the yearnings of their inmost souls. There are many such among the readers of this journal, and while they hold fast to their high ideal, and rejoice, as they must, that it is purified from the debasing conceptions that have so long degraded it, they will, I trust, not feel themselves out of sympathy with those whose aspirations and conceptions are not indeed incompatible with, but somewhat different from, their own. The central truth is reached by various paths, and the seekers start from various points, but the goal is won, and none can refuse to join in that most touching prayer of Christ to His Father that all His children—all sincere and earnest souls, wherever they now stand, however now conditioned—that all His children may be one in Him.

M.A. (Oxon.)

To CORRESPONDENTS.—Many letters again stand over through the pressure on our columns.

HABITUAL APPARITION OF A LIVING PERSON.*

There existed in the year 1845, and is still continued, in Livonia, about thirty-six miles from Riga and a mile and a-half from the small town of Wolmar, an institution of high repute for the education of young ladies, entitled the Pensionnat of Neuweleke. It is under the superintendence of Moravian directors ; of whom the principal, at the time of the occurrences about to be related, was named Buch.

There were, in that year, forty-two young ladies residing there as boarders, chiefly daughters of noble Livonian families ; among them, Mademoiselle Julie, second daughter of the Baron de Guldenstubbé, then thirteen years of age.

In this institution one of the female teachers at that time was Mademoiselle Emilie Sagée, a French lady, from Dijon. She was of the Northern type—a blonde, with very fair complexion, light-blue eyes, chestnut hair, slightly above the middle size, and of slender figure. In character she was amiable, quiet, and good-tempered ; not at all given to anger or impatience ; but of an anxious disposition, and as to her physical temperament, somewhat nervously excitable. Her health was usually good ; and during the year and a-half that she lived as teacher at Neuweleke, she had but one or two slight indispositions. She was intelligent and accomplished ; and the directors, during the entire period of her stay, were perfectly satisfied with her conduct, her industry, and her acquirements. She was at that time thirty two years of age.

A few weeks after Mademoiselle Sagée first arrived, singular reports began to circulate among the pupils. When some casual inquiry happened to be made as to where she was, one young lady would reply that she had seen her in such or such a room ; whereupon another would say, "Oh, no ! she can't be there ; for I have just met her on the stairway ;" or perhaps in some distant corridor. At first they naturally supposed it was mere mistake ; but, as the same thing occurred again and again, they began to think it very odd, and finally spoke to the other governesses about it. Whether the teachers, at that time, could have furnished an explanation or not, they gave none ; they merely told the young ladies it was all fancy and nonsense, and bade them pay no attention to it.

But, after a time, things much more extraordinary, and which could not be set down to imagination or mistake, began to occur. One day the governess was giving a lesson to a class of thirteen, of whom Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé was one, and was demonstrating, with eagerness, some proposition, to illustrate which she had occasion to write with chalk on a blackboard. While she was doing so, and the young ladies were looking at her, to their consternation, they suddenly saw two Mademoiselle Sagées, the one by the side of the other. They were exactly alike ; and they used the same gestures, only that the real person held a bit of chalk in her hand, and did actually write, while the double had no chalk, and only imitated the motion.

This incident naturally caused a great sensation in the establishment. It was ascertained, on inquiry, that every one of the thirteen young ladies in the class had seen the second figure, and that they all agreed in their description of its appearance and of its motions.

Soon after, one of the pupils, a Mademoiselle Antonie de Wrangl, having obtained permission, with some others, to attend a *salle champêtre* in the neighbourhood, and being engaged in completing her toilet, Mademoiselle Sagée had good-naturedly volunteered her aid, and was hooking her dress behind. The young lady, happening to turn round and to look in an adjacent mirror, perceived two Mademoiselle Sagées hooking her dress. The sudden apparition produced so much effect upon her that she fainted.

Months passed by, and similar phenomena were still repeated. Sometimes, at dinner, the double appeared standing behind the teacher's chair and imitating her motions as she ate—only that its hands held no knife and fork, and that there was no appearance of food ; the figure alone was repeated. All the pupils and the servants waiting on the table witnessed this.

It was only occasionally, however, that the double appeared to imitate the motions of the real person. Sometimes, when the latter rose from a chair, the figure would appear seated on it. On one occasion, Mademoiselle Sagée being confined to bed with an attack of influenza, the young lady already mentioned, Mademoiselle de Wrangl, was sitting by her bedside, reading to her. Suddenly the governess became stiff and pale ; and,

* An abridged version of this narrative was given by the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, in his "Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World."

seeming as if about to faint, the young lady, alarmed, asked if she was worse. She replied that she was not, but in a very feeble and languid voice. A few seconds afterwards, Mademoiselle de Wrangel, happening to look round, saw, quite distinctly, the figure of the governess walking up and down the apartment. This time the young lady had sufficient self-control to remain quiet, and even to make no remark to the patient. Soon afterward she came downstairs, looking very pale, and related what she had witnessed.

But the most remarkable example of this seeming independent action of the two figures happened in this wise :—

One day all the young ladies of the institution, to the number of forty-two, were assembled in the same room, engaged in embroidery. It was a spacious hall on the first floor of the principal building, and had four large windows, or rather glass doors, (for they opened to the floor,) giving entrance to a garden of some extent in front of the house. There was a long table in the centre of the room ; and here it was that the various classes were wont to unite for needlework or similar occupation.

On this occasion the young ladies were all seated at the table in question, whence they could readily see what passed in the garden ; and, while engaged at their work, they had noticed Mademoiselle Sagée there, not far from the house, gathering flowers, of which she was very fond. At the head of the table, seated in an arm-chair, (of green morocco, my informant says, she still distinctly recollects that it was,) sat another teacher, in charge of the pupils. After a time this lady had occasion to leave the room, and the arm-chair was left vacant. It remained so, however, for a short time only ; for of a sudden there appeared seated in it the figure of Mademoiselle Sagée. The young ladies immediately looked into the garden, and there she still was, engaged as before ; only they remarked that she moved very slowly and languidly, as a drowsy or exhausted person might. Again they looked at the arm-chair, and there she sat, silent, and without motion, but to the sight so palpably real that, had they not seen her outside in the garden, and had they not known that she appeared in the chair without having walked into the room, they would all have supposed that it was the lady herself. As it was, being quite certain that it was not a real person, and having become, to a certain extent, familiar with this strange phenomenon, two of the boldest approached and tried to touch the figure. They averred that they did feel a slight resistance, which they likened to that which a fabric of fine muslin or crape would offer to the touch. One of the two then passed close in front of the arm-chair, and actually *through* a portion of the figure. The appearance, however, remained, after she had done so, for some time longer, still seated, as before. At last it gradually disappeared ; and then it was observed that Mademoiselle Sagée resumed, with all her usual activity, her task of flower gathering. Every one of the forty-two pupils saw the same figure in the same way.

Some of the young ladies afterward asked Mademoiselle Sagée if there was anything peculiar in her feelings on this occasion. She replied that she recollects this only ; that, happening to look up, and perceiving the teacher's arm-chair to be vacant, she had thought to herself, "I wish she had not gone away ; these girls will be sure to be idling their time and getting into some mischief."

This phenomenon continued, under various modifications, throughout the whole time that Mademoiselle Sagée retained her situation at Neuwecke ; that is throughout a portion of the years 1845 and 1846 ; and, in all, for about a year and a half ; at intervals, however,—sometimes intermitting for a week, sometimes for several weeks at a time. It seemed chiefly to present itself on occasions when the lady was very earnest or eager in what she was about. It was uniformly remarked that the more distinct and material to the sight the double was, the more stiff and languid was the living person ; and in proportion as the double faded did the real individual resume her powers.

She herself, however, was totally unconscious of the phenomenon ; she had first become aware of it only from the report of others ; and she usually detected it by the looks of the persons present. She never, herself, saw the appearance, nor seemed to notice the species of rigid apathy which crept over her at the times it was seen by others.

During the eighteen months throughout which my informant had an opportunity of witnessing this phenomenon and of hearing of it through others, no example came to her knowledge of the appearance of the figure at any considerable distance—as of several miles—from the real person. Sometimes it appeared, but not far off, during their walks in the neighbourhood ; more

frequently, however, within doors. Every servant in the house had seen it. It was, apparently, perceptible to all persons, without distinction of age or sex.

It will be readily supposed that so extraordinary a phenomenon could not continue to shew itself, for more than a year, in such an institution, without injury to its prosperity. In point of fact, as soon as it was completely proved, by the double appearance of Mademoiselle Sagée before the class, and afterwards before the whole school, that there was no imagination in the case, the master began to reach the ears of the parents. Some of the more timid among the girls, also, became much excited, and evinced great alarm whenever they happened to witness so strange and inexplicable a thing. The natural result was, that their parents began to scruple about leaving them under such an influence. One after another, as they went home for the holidays, failed to return ; and though the true reason was not assigned to the directors, they knew it well. Being strictly upright and conscientious men, however, and very unwilling that a well-conducted, diligent, and competent teacher should lose her position on account of a peculiarity that was entirely beyond her control—a misfortune, not a fault—they persevered in retaining her, until, at the end of eighteen months, the number of pupils had decreased from forty-two to twelve. It then became apparent that either the teacher or the institution must be sacrificed ; and, with much reluctance and many expressions of regret on the part of those to whom her amiable qualities had endeared her, Mademoiselle Sagée was dismissed.

The poor girl was in despair. "Ah!" Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé heard her exclaim, soon after the decision reached her, "Ah ! the nineteenth time ! It is very, very hard to bear !" When asked what she meant by such an exclamation, she reluctantly confessed that previous to her engagement at Neuwecke she had been teacher in eighteen different schools, having entered the first when only sixteen years of age, and that, on account of the strange and alarming phenomenon which attached to her, she had lost, after a comparatively brief sojourn, one situation after another. As, however, her employers were in every other respect well satisfied with her, she obtained in each case favourable testimonials as to her conduct and abilities. Dependent entirely on her labour for support, the poor girl had been compelled to avail herself of these in search of a livelihood, in places where the cause of her dismissal was not known ; even though she felt assured, from experience, that a few months could not fail again to disclose it.

After she left Neuwecke, she went to live, for a time, in the neighbourhood, with a sister-in-law, who had several quite young children. Thither the peculiarity pursued her. Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé, going to see her there, learned that the children of three or four years of age all knew of it ; being in the habit of saying that "they saw two Aunt Emilie's."

Subsequently she set out for the interior of Russia, and Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé lost sight of her entirely.

That lady was not able to inform me whether the phenomenon had shewn itself during Mademoiselle Sagée's infancy, or previous to her sixteenth year, nor whether, in the case of any of her family or of her ancestors, a similar peculiarity had appeared.

I had the above particulars from Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé herself ; and she kindly gave me permission to publish it, with every particular of name, place, and date. She remained as pupil at Neuwecke during the whole time that Mademoiselle Sagée was teacher there. No one, therefore, could have had a better opportunity of observing the case in all its details.

In the course of my reading on this subject—and it has been somewhat extensive—I have not met a single example of the apparition of the living so remarkable and so incontrovertibly authentic as this. The institution of Neuwecke still exists, having gradually recovered its standing after Mademoiselle Sagée left it ; and corroborative evidence can readily be obtained by addressing its directors.

This narrative proves, beyond doubt or denial, that under particular circumstances the apparition or counterpart of a living person may appear at a certain distance from that person, and may seem, to ordinary human sight, so material as not to be distinguishable from a real body ; also that this appearance may be reflected from a mirror. Unless the young ladies who were courageous enough to try the experiment of touching it were deceived by their imaginations, it proves, further, that such an apparition may have a slight, but positive, consistency.

It seems to prove, also, that care or anxiety on the part of the living person may project (if I may so express it) the

apparition to a particular spot. Yet it was sometimes visible when no such cause could be assigned.

It proves, further, that when the apparition separated (if that be the correct expression) from the natural body, it took with it a certain portion of that body's ordinary life and strength. It does not appear that in this case the languor consequent upon such separation ever reached the state of trance or coma, or that the rigidity observed at the same time went as far as catalepsy; yet it is evident that the tendency was toward both of these conditions, and that that tendency was the greater in proportion as the apparition became more distinct.

Two remarkable peculiarities mark this case: one, that the appearance, visible without exception to everyone else, remained invisible to the subject of it; the other, that though the second figure was sometimes seen to imitate, like an image reflected in a mirror, the gestures and actions of the first, yet at other times it seemed to act entirely independent of it; appearing to walk up and down while the actual person lay in bed, and to be seated in the house while its counterpart moved about the garden.

It differs from other cases on record in this: that the apparition does not appear to have shewn itself at any considerable distance from the real person. It is possible (but this is theory only) that, if it had, the result on Mademoiselle Sagéo might have been to produce a state of trance during its continuance.

This case may afford us also a useful lesson. It may teach us that it is idle, in each particular instance of apparition or other rare and unexplained phenomenon, to deny its reality until we can discover the purpose of its appearance: to reject, in short, every extraordinary fact until it shall have been clearly explained to us for what great object God ordains or permits it. In this particular case, what special intention can be assigned? A meritorious young woman is, after repeated efforts, deprived by an habitual apparition of the opportunity to earn an honest livelihood. No other effect is apparent, unless we are to suppose that it was intended to warn the young girls who witnessed the appearance against materialism. But it is probable the effect upon them was to produce alarm rather than conviction.

The phenomenon is one of a class. There is good reason, doubtless, for the existence of that class; but we ought not to be called upon to shew the particular end to be effected by each example. As a general proposition, we believe in the great utility of thunderstorms, as tending to purify the atmosphere; but who has a right to require that we disclose the design of Providence if, during the elemental war, Amelia be stricken down a corpse from the arms of Celadon?

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

In a letter just received from a Catholic friend she says: "Miss C. told me, last Tuesday, July 31st, she received a letter from Madame Fellippiani, one of the ladies of the Sacré Coeur at Rome. She enclosed a little prayer for the dying, with an appeal that as every instant someone is dying, Miss C. should pray much for them. The next day, Wednesday, she prayed much for the dying. At Mass it was her one thought, and even here, where they all came in the afternoon, her mind, she told me, was with the dying. The day before Madame Fellippiani wrote, her own brother had been killed in the earthquake at Ischia, and on the Wednesday when Miss C. was with the dying all day, a beloved aunt, whose death bed she would, if possible, have attended, died unexpectedly in America. The telegram of her death arrived here on Saturday. Thus Madame Fellippiani and Miss C. had both (in thought) been with their beloved. The news from America was much softened by this occurrence."

August 8th, 1883.

A.M.H.W.

The West of England Spiritualists held one of their field days on Sunday last, when orations were delivered in their meeting hall by Mrs. C. Groom, of Birmingham. The services were well attended, large numbers of persons, in fact, being unable to gain admission in the evening. The subjects of the discourses were the "Antiquity of Man," and the "Light-bringer of the Times." At the conclusion of each service Mrs. Groom gave what is known as clairvoyant descriptions, which were satisfactory. It is certainly a sign of the times that this body, which four years ago did not exist as such locally, can now command large and intellectual audiences at the lectures given under its auspices.—*Devon County Standard, August 11th.*

CHRISTIANA, THE SOMNAMBULE, IN 1820.

From the forthcoming volume of "Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation" (Lives of Kerner and Howitt by Mrs. Howitt-Watts)* we are enabled to give the following narrative from the earliest work on Psychology which appeared from the pen of Kerner.

"The first of Dr. Kerner's remarkable series of works connected with the inner life of man appeared in the year 1826. It is entitled 'The History of two Somnambules, together with certain Notable Things from the Realms of Magical Cure and Psychology.' It is a book entirely unknown to the English reader, never having been translated, and now scarce in Germany. It is a diary kept by Kerner with reference to two remarkable patients of his; the one the daughter of a vine-grower at Weinsberg, the other a young woman born at Stuttgart and living in service at Weinsberg. Both patients exhibited marvellous phenomena, and, treated magnetically by their physician, both were ultimately restored to perfect health."

The following facts, extracted from "The Two Somnambules" may interest our readers. "They relate," says Kerner, "to a thoroughly respectable girl, a true child of nature, the daughter of an honest citizen and vine-grower at Weinsberg, a girl whose occupations consisted in cultivation of the vineyard and garden during the week, and on Sundays in reading her Bible and hymn book. Her innate talent was, however, such that together with the thorough instruction she had received at school, she could, especially in writing her mother tongue, vie with young ladies educated at celebrated academies. Possibly, her father, who in his youth had been well educated, had cared for the improvement of his daughter.

"The education manifests itself in the following account drawn up by him of the singular origin of the sickness of his children.

"In the year 1816 on the 6th July," he writes, "my son named Frederick was seized with indisposition. It shewed itself in the following manner. On the previous morning he stepped before the looking-glass—a thing quite unusual with him—and contemplated his reflection. Upon this he burst forth into the most immoderate laughter which seemed to convulse his whole body. He was reproved by me severely for this. He replied that he felt himself impelled to this laughter in spite of himself. He went that day to school and also the following morning, but returned in about an hour complaining of a severe pain in his head and eyes. A doctor was summoned who advised baths and various medicines, but the boy declared that it was quite fruitless to administer them, because he must surely die. However, through obedience and love, he submitted to the treatment prescribed, declaring, however, continually that "all was in vain." The schoolmaster came to see the poor fellow as he lay apparently dead, stiff and cold, and took his hand, saying, "Good night Fritz!" Immediately that the hand of his schoolmaster touched him, he recognised him and exclaimed, "I shall have no more good nights. This will not last long." Thus he fell asleep at the age of eleven years, one month, and fourteen days, after twenty-four hours' illness.

"Although we all," continues the father, "felt the death of this good boy with much sorrow, the one most inconsolable was my daughter Christiana, thirteen years of age. From this period she experienced so strong a yearning after her dead brother that she frequently would hide herself in a room beneath the roof of our house, from whence she could gaze into the churchyard where he was interred, and would there spend hours weeping; thus gradually through this excessive yearning after her brother, and through her many tears and lamentation, did this poor girl fall into a serious state of ill-health."

A second brother, aged thirteen, four years later, was seized with a severe cough, and during his illness he burst forth into terrible weeping. Upon repeated inquiry as to the cause of this sudden grief, he cried aloud the name of Fritz, declaring that to him he must go; and then fell into a condition which threatened convulsions, his eyes having become fixed.

Dr. Kerner was sent for to this poor boy. He was placed in bed, and fell into a sort of delirium, being possessed of such strength that it required three persons to keep him in bed. He repeatedly uttered loudly the name of his brother, and said that Fritz was present, and that he must embrace him. He said that his brother wore a long white robe, a yellow sash round

his waist; upon his head a crown, and a golden cross upon his breast. He spoke to persons around him as though they were his brother, and said that at three o'clock the next morning Fritz would come to fetch him. After further magnetic treatment being employed by Dr. Kerner, the cough returned for a time, and he gradually became cured entirely.

The condition of Christiana also now grew one of anxiety; the yearning after her dead brother continued ever overwhelmingly. She fell into sudden trances, had clairvoyant, symbolical and prophetic dreams. Certain persons she could not endure in her neighbourhood, anxiety and distress falling upon her in their presence, without any assignable reason. Thus she occupied herself chiefly in the open air, and worked with extraordinary industry in the vineyard and garden. But even there she would frequently be overcome by the trance-condition, and be found asleep beneath a tree. At such times her countenance would be filled with an inexpressible gentleness and sweetness; she would speak of being taken by a guide into an indescribably lovely region, which she said was Paradise, and even yet higher into a region which appeared to her still more beautiful and glorious. Nevertheless, all that spring she complained of great weakness, and as summer wore on serious symptoms of ill-health supervened. Dr. Kerner was in October called in, and then commenced his systematic magnetic treatment of Christiana, the history of which forms the first portion of his "History of Two Somnambules." Its contents are only second in interest to those in his later and more celebrated work, "The Seeress of Prevorst." Christiana in her state of trance prescribed her own treatment, foretold her approaching crises, became a highly-developed clairvoyante and a sensitive to whom the secrets of nature were revealed—as for instance the curative properties of herbs and trees, the properties of metals and minerals, &c. To her also were presented beautiful visions of the world of spirits. Through the judicious treatment of Dr. Kerner, who availed himself wisely of the clear-seeing of his patient, this interesting girl was restored within the space of three years to entire health. The history is one well worth the labour of translation, since it is a store-house of facts relative to the employment of mesmerism as a curative agent.

The following passage is given as a specimen of the spiritual visions of Christiana:—

"October 26th, 1820. She complained of headache. Later on violent cramp in the stomach came on. After ten o'clock she was magnetised for a considerable time. She said, after a shiver had gone through her, 'There is something supernatural in the room.' I assured her that nothing was present except her father and myself. She said: 'But what is that beautiful music which I hear out of the distance? It is of a peculiar kind. Such tones I cannot bear.' Later she said: 'I look into an indescribably lovely valley. There upon the grass, beneath a green tree, are seated two rows of happy spirits. They are clothed in white, and one plays upon a harp. These are the sounds which I heard; they come from the right hand. Oh! what happiness! Thither leads a dark and narrow path, but when once this is passed one comes into a lovely open region. Oh! that I could only find amongst them my brother Frederick! Certainly he is there.' She wept bitterly. Soon she cheered up, and said: 'Now is my brother near me to my right hand. I see the most beautiful trees and a mountain, more beautiful by far than our Weibertreu.* Oh! that I were only there! I see houses and huts beneath trees as if they belonged to hermits.' Again she said, and a shudder ran through her as before, 'There is something supernatural in the room! Something smiles upon me from above! What a smile! That must be an angel, or the Eye of God! Also I behold very far off the fully Glorified; their splendour it would be impossible for me to endure except at a distance. Now all is closed again. Wake me up!' When she awoke she was very cheerful, and much strengthened.

"October 28th. After I had magnetised her about half-an-hour she had cramp in her mouth. She seized my hand and laid it upon her lips. By this means the cramp was lessened, but not entirely gone. She asked for magnetised water, and having drunk it, the cramp had departed. Then came on sudden starting and shuddering. She said: 'I hear music, as the tone of an organ.' Then Frederick appeared, and she, in a low voice, said bit by bit as follows: 'My Frederick is close to my bed, and tells me that through these magnetic passes I shall recover.'

* A hill near Weinsberg.

I am difficult to bring into the sleep. I was once nearly but too quickly brought almost to the condition of trance. But my Frederick says it was dangerous.* It was as though my soul had been divided from my body. I see such clearness and so many objects around me that it is impossible to describe. It is as if Heaven were opened. There smiles an angel down upon me. He wears two crowns of flowers. And there above, far within, I dare not gaze, but I see a form whose countenance is surrounded by rays as of sunlight. Oh! that I could ascend thither. My Frederick says that when I sleep I may do so. Now I understand why I had that cramp. It was to prepare me to ascend on high! I asked how she knew this. 'My Frederick tells me so,' she replied.

"November 2nd. She had cramps in the head and eyes, and her voice failed. I breathed into her mouth, and the cramp departed. She said immediately, 'There stands Frederick again. He carries in his hand a sprig of apple-blossom. That causes me awe, for I know that now it is not the spring. I behold a number of beautiful trees, and a pear-tree of unusual size in blossom. Why am I so full of awe! I know that it really is the autumn—this is all to me so preternatural. I hover between waking and sleeping! My body is not here—my soul wishes to go forth. It is as though I had no home.' She added, 'Alone through magnetic treatment shall I regain my health.' Then she beheld a valley of exquisite beauty where was a clear, bright fountain from which she drank. Then a cornfield where three angels were reaping corn, &c."

In this "History of Two Somnambules," amongst other noteworthy passages are, at

PAGE.

- 35 Remarkable cure of a swelling.
- 37 Effect of a black handkerchief and its disturbance of the magnetic sleep.
- 60 Prophecies.
- 74 Clairvoyant perception of a piece of mother-of-pearl on the coat of the stomach.
- 89 Somnambule says that it will come away on the morrow in seven pieces.
- 94 They do so come away.
- 134 Another prophecy fulfilled.
- 170 Prophetic words with reference to the Somnambule's cure.
- 176 How the Soul leaves the Body.
- 189 Prescribes for an epileptic boy.
- 353 Experiences at the death-bed of a patient.
- 377 Effects of plants. The hazel draws off the magnetic stream. The laurel strengthens it. Means of breaking off or more firmly binding the rapport.
- 381 Remarks on the Somnambule's hair growing in colour like that of her magnetiser.
- 388 Means of causing a clairvoyante to recollect when awake what she describes in the other state.
- 401 Boy bitten by a mad dog cured by magnetism.

A WARNING VOICE.—A correspondent writes: An officer of the late Bengal army, retired after long service, for a year before his death was confined to bed, and during the day was attended by his sister, a very intelligent person, not at all of a nervous temperament. On one occasion she left his bedroom for a change to the dining-room. Both were very commodious apartments and on the same floor, but had no direct communication with each other; in a short time, after she had left the bedroom, she heard very distinctly and in a clear voice, "You are wanted in the next room," upon entering it she found her brother prostrate upon the floor quite exhausted and unable to get into bed; he died in a few days. There was no one upon that floor but themselves. The lady affirmed that she heard the voice as distinctly as she heard mine, and was annoyed when I asked if she had not been mistaken. I was very intimate with both, and more truthful and excellent people it would be difficult to find; she often referred to the voice when speaking of her brother's illness. I understand Spiritualists believe that every one has a guardian spirit; this case and "the warning voice," published in a recent number of "Light," may be examples, but comparatively few cases of the kind so far as I know are recorded. If guardian spirits do not warn us of danger or evil, or influence us to perform good actions I am at a loss to know what their duty is, or for what purpose they attend us. Would some of your readers kindly enlighten me?—W.M.B.

* Cahagnet relates that one of his somnambules was so far gone that he was in great terror lest he should be unable to recall her back to life again. It was only with great difficulty that he brought her back.

TEMPORARY OFFICES OF "LIGHT."
38, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
BLOOMSBURY, W.C.
(Entrance in Woburn Street.)

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "Light." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding and enclose stamps for the return Postage.

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The Annual Subscription for "Light," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

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Light :

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18TH, 1883.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor of "Light" is out of town, and correspondents are therefore asked to exercise a little patience if their communications have not in every case immediate attention.

REVIEW.**ESSAI SUR L'HUMANITE POSTHUME ET LE SPIRITISME.***

(Continued from page 359.)

But he soon encountered another class of facts, which he had no difficulty in relating to the former. From the posthumous phantom he came to the discovery of the "living phantom," or what is known to students of this literature as the doppelgänger or "double." M. D'Assier seems seldom to have drawn from books for information in the first instance, but only to have consulted them when he had laid a basis for his inductions in living testimony. A similar method is being followed by the Psychical Research Society here, though he occasionally shews a facility of belief as regards some ill-verified statements in books which would not be accepted by our English investigators. After citing a few more of his cases, he proceeds to note the usual characteristics and conditions of the phenomenon. A sort of syncope or trance marks the expeditions of the "double," but often a deep sleep suffices. On return to normal consciousness, there will sometimes be a distinct recollection of the journey, at others it will seem a dream, or the waker will retain only fragmentary impressions of his distant proceedings, perhaps will bring back no consciousness of them whatever.

Supposing the human phantom to remain in what is described as a fluidic connection with the physical organism, drawing therefrom all its force, it follows that this force will be at its maximum at the point of departure, and will be feebler and less effective as it recedes from its centre of action. That is exemplified in the power of speech, as in the extraordinary case related to Jung Stilling by the Baron de Salza, Chamberlain to the King of Sweden. The Baron, returning home one day, was met in the park near the house by his father, dressed as usual, with whom he had a long conversation on their way back. They entered the house, and proceeded together to the father's room. On going in, the Baron saw his father in bed undressed, and in a profound sleep. At the same moment the apparition with which he had been discoursing vanished. On awaking, the father described a dream in which he had seen his son in danger of drowning (as the fact had been that day), thus proving that his double had been really abroad, and that the subsequent meeting and conversation (though apparently not recollected by

the dreamer) were no hallucination of the Baron's. In this case, according to M. D'Assier, the faculty of speech was due to propinquity with the sleeping organism; whereas in other cases which he cites, where the apparitions had travelled great distances, though distinct, they were mute. He is, however, prepared with an enlargement of his theory, as well to cover some alleged exceptions in this respect, as to account for the extraordinary vitality of the posthumous phantom long after its complete disengagement from the lifeless corpse. "The phantom can draw its force, not only from the body whence it proceeds, but also from persons with a physical or moral constitution in peculiar relation to its own, or who have a marked aptitude for what are commonly called the phenomena of Spiritism ('mediums'). The Seeress of Prevost possessed this faculty in the highest degree. She felt herself nourished by the emanations of those who came to see her. Those of her own family, owing to the conformity of their constitutions, were most subject to this sort of vampirism, and they soon felt themselves enfeebled in her presence."

The progress of his inquiry next led M. D'Assier to seek further generalisations in the records of a literature long despised. For an educated, and even scientific writer in the nineteenth century to speak seriously of witchcraft, at first seems an unaccountable eccentricity. But it must be remembered that the credibility of facts coming under that denomination does not imply the connotations of mediæval conventional belief on the subject arising from theological preconceptions. Yet it is undoubtedly in the rejection of these by modern intelligence that the original cause of incredulity in the facts referred to is to be found. The assumption that the facts are themselves objectionable to science was a mere after-thought, when they had already ceased to be matters of belief, and when the evidence for them had been forgotten. That the phenomenon has died out with the popular belief in it is a common assertion alone sufficient to dispose of the question of its truth in most minds; but it is an assertion which is open to some question. If the essential fact of witchcraft be, as M. D'Assier thinks, the extrusion and physical agency of an interior and fluidic semblance, a body of subtle and evanescent materiality, this agency might avail to explain many of the alleged physical phenomena of so-called Spiritualism, or Spiritism, should these ever come to be admitted. That the manifestations no longer take on the forms dictated by mediæval beliefs is only what might be expected by anyone who recognises the power of the human imagination (whether consciously or unconsciously exercised) to modify whatever belongs to the organism. It is thus also a matter of course that we should hear little now of witchcraft as a malevolent influence, since the modern "medium" has not what may be called the Satanic faith which was an essential factor in such operations. And the old "imps" are quite naturally succeeded, in accordance with altered ideas, by the supposed departed spirits, or the "John Kings" and "Peters" of the séance-room.

On this subject, generally considered, I know nothing more instructive than the opening chapter, "On the Declining Sense of the Miraculous," in Mr. Lecky's "Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe." We there see the utter powerlessness of evidence, even when examined and approved by the most educated intellects of the age, to contend against the indirect, negative influence of antagonistic conceptions. That credulity was favoured by intellectual predisposition in the Middle Ages, is a common-place, and, doubtless, true remark. But it is also pre-eminently true that the incredulity which succeeded it was not only favoured, but actually and solely caused by a contrary predisposition. It signified nothing that men wholly exempt from the credulous bias stood forward, on grounds of evidence alone, in defence of the dying belief. Of Glanvil, the author of *Saducismus Triumphatus*, Mr. Lecky says: "To those who only know him as the defender of witchcraft, it may appear a somewhat startling paradox to say that the predominating characteristic of the mind of Glanvil was an intense scepticism. He has even been termed by a modern critic 'the first English writer who had thrown scepticism into a definite form.'" He was an ardent advocate of the new inductive philosophy, with its tendency to discard all beliefs resting merely on authority or tradition. Yet on this subject he was one of the earliest to protect against what has since been called the credulity of disbelief, or in Goethe's phrase, the "inverted superstition" of incredulity. Nor was he alone. And "no writer," says Mr. Lecky, "comparable in ability or influence to Glanvil,

More, Cudworth, or even Casaubon, appeared to challenge the belief." Yet "the scepticism that was already pervading all classes was steadily and silently increasing, under the influence of an intellectual movement that was too general and too powerful for any individual genius to arrest."

The space at my disposal will not allow me to transcribe the evidence adduced by M. D'Assier from the trials for witchcraft. I can only refer those who would appreciate its weight to his book, or, still better, to the original records. M. D'Assier takes them chiefly from the works of Des Mousseaux, a contemporary Catholic writer of great research in these matters.

Putting aside all that pertains to demonology, M. D'Assier concerns himself solely with these phenomena as illustrating organic duplication and projection. He finds it impossible to deny to the phantom an actual organism, with a potentiality, in proportion to the energy it derives from its physical centre, of performing all the functions of physical life. Connected with the body, at however great a distance, by invisible capillary bonds, it can be retracted or re-absorbed with instantaneous rapidity. That is proved by a phenomenon which is a familiar feature in accounts of this description. It is called Repercussion. The fluidic phantom is sufficiently material to receive an injury or impression, and an immediate examination of the person of the medium or "witch" will discover a wound or mark on a corresponding part of the body. The lien or rapport is so intimate that the physical organism receives the shock at almost the same moment as its counterpart.

Some of us have heard of ingenious contrivances for exposing "mediums" by staining the "spirit hands," or the implements moved about at sances, with colouring matter, afterwards found upon the person of the medium. Upon the hypothesis that it is the medium's "double" which is concerned in the manifestations, M. D'Assier would say that it is exactly what we should expect, and that it proves nothing whatever for the intended purpose.

Further to exhibit the characteristics of these phenomena, M. D'Assier cites, at length, one of the best attested cases on record—that of Mary Gough, the evidence for which is to be found in Baxter's "Reality of the World of Spirits." A later case* recorded by Dale Owen, American Ambassador at the Court of Naples, is still more extraordinary and instructive in regard to the possibilities of the human "double." It is that of Emilie Sagée, governess in a ladies' school, at Riga, in Livonia. Here the body and its double were observed simultaneously, in broad day, and by many persons. "One day all the school, forty-two in number, were in a room on the ground-floor, glass doors leading into the garden. They saw Emilie gathering flowers in the garden, when suddenly her figure appeared on a vacant sofa. Looking instantly into the garden they still saw Emilie there; but they observed that she moved languidly and as if exhausted or drowsy. Two of the bolder approached the double, and offered to touch it; they felt a slight resistance, which they compared to that of muslin or crape. One of them passed through part of the figure; the apparition remained some moments longer, then disappeared, but gradually. This phenomenon occurred, in different ways, as long as Emilie remained at the school, for about a year and a-half in 1845 and 1846, with intermittent periods from one to several weeks. It was remarked that the more distinct and material the double appeared, the more uneasy, languid, and suffering was the real person; when, on the contrary, the double became feeble, the patient recovered strength. Emilie had no consciousness of her double, nor did she ever see it."

M. D'Assier comments at length upon this story, which sufficiently illustrates his view of the connection between the physical organism and its distant representative. "The phantom," he says, "was formed at the expense of the body, drawing to it, by a sort of aspiration, the constitutive elements. . . . Linked by an invisible net-work of vessels to the body, the phantom can draw to itself the vital forces of the latter. One then sees the life by a singular inversion deserting the body, which becomes proportionately corpse-like; and transferring itself to the phantom, which thus obtains an extraordinary consistence. With the living, it is an exceptional phenomenon. But when death has burst the bonds attaching it to our organism, it is separated, as it were definitively, from the body, and constitutes the posthumous phantom."

(To be continued.)

TEACHING IN "PHILOCHRISTUS," REGARDING THE HOLY SPIRIT.*

Then he said to me, "Not many days gone by I heard Jesus speak concerning the Holy Spirit; and His words were on this wise: As in each man, the man's breath or spirit is the life of the body, so in each man there is a certain holy breath or spirit, which is the life of the soul; whence also cometh every good thought and deed unto the man. Moreover thou seest the air which we breathe, and which is the breath of our bodies, is but a part of that great sea of air which embraceth the whole earth, so that there is nothing hidden from the touch thereof, in so much that the same air or breath which is coming towards us from yonder mountain top, making the terebinth trees to bow, and which even now rustleth in the olive-trees above us, even this is our breath and our life. Now I have heard Jesus say that there is a likeness between this breath of our bodies and the breath or spirit of our souls. For as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth, even so is it with the spirit of our souls, the spirit of goodness, which is the Holy Spirit of God."

Then I said, "But how shall we obtain this Holy Spirit? Or is it indeed needful that we should obtain it, seeing that we have it already? Or do some have it, but others have it not?" Nathaniel answered and said, "All have it. But some have little; and none much; and Jesus has come that we may have it abundantly. But how we shall obtain it, this I know not now. But this I know, that Jesus hath the Holy Spirit in Himself, and that He will impart it to us. For I heard Him say that no man can enter into the Kingdom of God unless he is born again of the Holy Spirit." . . .

Nathaniel smiled and said, "Our Master also teacheth that the presence of the Holy Spirit is with two or three, whosoever they are gathered together in His name. But this doctrine He findeth not on words of Scripture; but methinks He seeth that there is a certain spirit of goodness, or kindness, which passeth from one man to his neighbour, and gathereth strength as it passeth. For it is the Spirit of Love. Wherefore, as it seemeth to me, our Master teacheth that the Holy Spirit is present in some sort in the intercourse between man and man, whosoever men do aught together as the children of God."

"But yet," said I, "I would fain know why the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is not forgiven." Thus said Nathaniel, "All men have within themselves some portion of the Spirit of God; even as we now have some portion of that great wind and breath of Heaven, which here in Jotapata is rustling in the olive branches, and yonder at Capernaum is driving the fishing-boats; and out in the Great Sea is speeding the ships of Tarshish on their path. Now if thou closest thy mouth and thy nostrils against the winds of heaven and sayest, 'The air is poison to me, I will not breathe it,'—behold thou perishest. Even so is it with the Holy Spirit. Every man that cometh into the world, hath in him some portion of the Holy Spirit, and dependeth and liveth thereon. But if he shall say knowingly in his heart, 'I will not breathe thereof; I will call good evil, and the Holy Spirit I will call it unholy;' then lo, his spirit dieth within him, and he can no more enter into the life of God."

"THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF SPIRITUALISM," by Epes Sargent—his last great work previous to his decease—is a book replete with facts, shewing that the spiritual philosophy is a natural science, and consequently, not outside of nature. It should be in the hands of every investigator in the world.

MR. GERALD MASSEY, writing to the *Banner of Light*, says:—"At this auspicious moment I send to press the last section of the literary work on which I have spent twelve years of life and labour, and shall soon be free to take the platform once more. I have now kept silence for ten years on purpose to have something new to say. It is possible that I may open fire in London; but I am also looking forward, as indeed I have been doing for years, to making my second lecturing tour through the States. I have never forgotten my audiences there, in which 1,000 listeners could at times be seen craning forward as with one face that hungered to catch an utterance of the most advanced thought."

* Curiously enough this very narrative had been in type for some time, and had actually been selected to form part of the contents of the present issue of "LIGHT," at least a week before Mr. Massey's article came to hand. Ed. "LIGHT."

* PP. 177-89.—"Philochristus, Memoirs of a Disciple of the Lord." Second edition, London, 1878. To this beautiful book, which should be welcome to all readers of "LIGHT," we hope to return on some future occasion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

A Séance with Mr. D. D. Home.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In November, 1862, I was present at one of Mr. D. D. Home's séances in the house of Mr. S. C. Hall, "The Boltons," to which Mr. John Bright had been invited, he having expressed a strong wish to see something of Spiritualism. On the day of the séance, Mr. Hall received a note from Mr. Bright asking to be allowed to bring a friend, Mr. Lucas, editor of the *Star Newspaper*. Fortunately Mr. Home was in the house at the time and at once consented—though the full number had been invited, but he never refused if he could help it. Not many minutes after we were seated at the large heavy round table, knocks were given for the alphabet, and the words given were "You are trying to prevent our raising the table." Mr. Hall asked, "Who is trying?" and pointed to each in succession when three knocks for "Yes," were given in front of Mr. Lucas, who at once said, "Yes, I was putting my whole weight upon it." I, sitting next but one to him, then asked, "Do you think that right?" "Oh! yes," he answered, "I came here to investigate." "Certainly," I said, "but neither to assist nor retard the movements." A message then came, desiring Mr. —— to sit upon the table; this was a stout gentleman, who was present. The desire was at once complied with, and *instantly* the table was not only raised but *tossed* up as you would toss a baby in your arms—*saying* as plainly as words could have done, "You *try* to prevent our raising the table with nothing upon it, and we will prove to you that we can do it with this additional weight." We had a great deal more during the evening which was satisfactory and convincing, but I do not like to take up too much of your space, and one such **FACT** as the above is enough. No one who was present at the séance can forget it.

A. S.

The God-Idea.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—I have read "M.A.(Oxon's)" notes in your last with some surprise, and regret that the *Spectator's* remarks should have met with so much sympathy from him. The distressing event which called them forth is, after all, but one of a series which are happening every day all over the world. Why should this case be singled out, and commented on as if it stood alone? If the subject is to be discussed at all, let it be treated in its completeness. Let instances be collected and examined, so that there may be a chance of correct generalisation: and it will soon be found that the question amounts to this: Why does God not interfere to prevent all the calamities which desolate nations and families in every part of the world? And this will be much the same as asking, Why does He not so neutralise the effects of broken laws as to make this world a far safer and happier dwelling-place for His creatures than it is? Perhaps, put in this form, it sounds too much like a child's question, but I cannot help this. What would be the use of laws if God were always stepping in to prevent the consequences of their violation? What would become of human freedom? And how would such a state of things contribute towards man's discipline, towards his victories over himself, and over the difficulties, natural and spiritual, which encompass him? Is it not by conflicts such as these that true and noble characters are formed? We are told that natural laws are "cruel, pitiless, and tyrannical." But they are so to those only who fail to place themselves in harmony with them. The exceptions are more apparent than real. The cruelty, then, cannot be charged upon the law, but upon its violator. A man commits a crime, and brings himself and his family into disgrace and poverty, perhaps transmits disease to his posterity. This proves, not cruelty in the law, but wickedness in the breaker of it. Another places himself in a dangerous position, and in a moment of inattention or carelessness his foot slips, and he is mangled to death, or disabled for life. A tire comes off the wheel of a railway carriage, or a signal man is asleep at his post, and the result is maiming or death to the passengers. The question is just as reasonable in these cases as in the Sunderland disaster. Why did not God interpose to prevent so much misery? It is one of cause and effect. The cause is in man. Were God habitually to prevent the effect, would not this be to stultify Himself?

But apart from these considerations, does it not seem rather presumptuous for men, from their very circumscribed point of view, to pretend to judge of the working of so vast a machine, and to found on their narrow deductions a case against the Divine character?

The writer is severe against "the anthropomorphic conceptions of vulgarised theology." But it is likely even these would be preferable to the vague conception of "an impersonal Over-soul," which "in no wise interferes with the affairs of this world." For myself, I trust to have escaped both conceptions. And yet I believe, with thousands of far greater intelligence than myself, that God is an infinite Humanity. "M.A." seems to think that personality and humanity, as applied to God, suppose limitation—perhaps because he has not yet shaken off the last vestiges of materialism, which are apt to cling to the most spiritual of us. However this may be, he will find that by abstracting his mind from material ideas, especially of time and space, it will not be so difficult to perceive that God must possess all the essentials of humanity in an infinite degree—that therefore He is human in first principles, and that, for this very reason, we are men, made "*in His image and likeness*." It is very well to ridicule the crude conceptions of the ignorant and undeveloped, but anthropomorphism is necessary to human conceptions of Deity. Rightly understood, it is rational and philosophical. In proportion as it is discarded, the idea of God becomes confused and impractical. We cannot love an impersonal essence, or an Over-soul. To call such a thing "our Father" is too ludicrous. So little hold can it have on our reverence or our love, that we may say hard things against it without a pang of conscience.

Mankind, with few exceptions, always has believed, and always will believe (whatever "philosophers" may tell them) in a Supreme Intelligence, whose children they intuitively feel they are, and whom they worship as *Father*. And if a father, then, of necessity, a person, who cares for his children, and rules them with a view to their eternal good.

I cannot but feel that the writer, whom I greatly esteem, will acknowledge on reflection, that these views are more rational and harmonious than the cold and repulsive ideas of God which "science," stepping out of her proper sphere, has thought fit to present us with.

W. D. AVENING.

Atherley-road, Shanklin.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have been so greatly benefited by the weekly contributions to "LIGHT" of "M.A. (Oxon.)" that I wish to make some little acknowledgment in kind, by stating so much of "the true faith of a Christian" as bears on his "Notes" in your last number.

It is true, as he remarks, "that for those who accept as final the revelation made to man by Christ the question is already closed"; but closed only in the same way as any question regarding the validity of Euclid's Elements is closed to a mathematician. It is always open to, and incumbent on, every truth seeker to regard as an open question for him whatever, whether in moral or scientific doctrine, is not clear to his understanding or does not seem satisfactory to his sense of justice. The object of revelation is to make clear what would otherwise remain dark—to solve, not increase mysteries. I accept the Christian religion as the best, because it alone of all that I know, when rightly apprehended, fully justifies the ways of God to man.

Your correspondent says:—"On the Spectator's assumption of a personal God, who is omnipotent, and omniscient, and who possesses freewill, I can see no answer whatever that is even moderately satisfactory." Here I make a preliminary objection to the conventional use of the term "free-will," a term which I have never been able to understand. I have a notion of freedom, and of will, but of "free-will" I can form no idea. It seems to me that every one is at all times free to will, wish, desire, or purpose whatever he can; ability of accomplishment is another thing. "Freedom," says Locke, in his "Conduct of the Understanding," "belongs as little to the will as swiftness to sleep, or squareness to virtue. Freedom to do is one power, will to do is another. To ask, therefore, whether the will has freedom is to ask whether one power has another power, one ability another ability." If by free-will is meant liberty or power of choice, then, certainly, no such power can be attributed to the Divine will regarded as Supreme, for in absolute freedom, as in absolute necessity, there can be no choice, since choice implies defective knowledge. One who

purposing to go to a certain place, comes to three roads, ignorant of which is right, has a liberty of choice which he would rather be without. If he knew which of the ways would lead to his destination he would be free in having no choice. The attribute of omniscience is incompatible with freedom of choice, because, in every case, the subject being fully conscious of the only best, no room is left for alternative action. Your correspondent says he is "not prepared to discuss the question on metaphysical grounds;" but I do not see how a moral or religious question can fairly be discussed on any other grounds.

On the assumption of a personal God, &c., the writer says: "I can see no answer to the *Spectator's* difficulty that is even moderately satisfactory. I can find none that does not do dis-honour to my idea of God," &c. Why not? Is the physical body and this temporary stage of existence so much the supreme concern of Spiritualists, that they regard preservation from its dangers, and exemption from physical suffering and death to be the first and chief concern of Providence? Let any of your readers try to imagine a world such as they believe this to be, designed as a training school for higher states of life, without the experience of trial and sorrow, and without the consequent sympathy, patience, forbearance and forgiveness of love, and he will find a life not worth living, not even worth thinking about. Let him try to write a novel or drama with such imaginary characters (?) and the folly of mere benevolence will become evident to him.

As regards the Sunderland catastrophe, surely Spiritualists are not so selfish as to grudge the blessing which little children bring with them to the inhabitants of Heaven or of the spirit-world, or so unwise as to wish themselves deprived of the continuous renewal of such blessedness when they join the majority. Truly, death, which is conscious defect or privation of life, was not to the children but to their parents; a death which growing faith in immortality, and increase of open vision and communion will destroy. As a friend suggests, the catastrophe may serve as a Divine protest against selfishness even in little children. This world may not be, as Leibnitz contended, the best of all possible worlds, but it may be, and I believe is, the best for its special purpose in reference to an absolutely perfect end. Who remembers last year's headache or heartache in the health and happiness of to-day, or last week's had dream in the enjoyment of waking life? But this life of seventy or eighty years is less than those compared to eternity.

To come now to the Christian faith regarding the God-Idea, I am glad that, as the writer says, "we are hampered in our most elementary attempts to grasp the idea of God by the difficulty of conceiving intelligence without the limitations of personality;" and that "the God of most people is associated with their highest idea of human perfection." Certainly, the Christians idea of God is that of "a glorified man with all human faculties and qualities developed to perfection: a Being of perfect power, wisdom, and beauty, but *a Being in the form of man*," whatever that form in its glorified aspect may be. I do not see how the higher, or even the highest Spiritualism can give us any better conception, or how a being "without body, parts, or passions, " can ever be an object of thought, still less of reverence and of love.

Freely conceding to every Jew, Brahmin, or Buddhist all that his religion is to him individually, apart from any seemingly opposing statements in his sacred writings, I claim no individuality or esoteric character for any doctrine I hold as Christian, but am prepared to shew that every such doctrine is as clearly deducible from the New Testament as are gold and silver from their respective ores.

The Christian revelation of the Divine nature is, that in true being God and Humanity are eternally one and inseparable. In phenomenal or conditioned states of consciousness they are from the human side, which states are at-oned or reconciled in attained perfection of eternal life in which every man without exception will find himself in all degrees of being, where he has always been in immost consciousness—at home with the Father and absolutely one with Universal Humanity in all worlds. Of the many necessary stages of such progress homewards, and of the many mansions (*μονάς*), literally stages or resting places, in the upward journey, I can affirm nothing save that in each and all of them I shall be I and no other, with a growing realisation of inherent unity with and in universal existence. From individual I shall become personal, without any loss of individuality. By personality, in the strict sense of the word, I mean that which best manifests the sum of existence. Where any man has attained conscious perfection of being in all degrees of life, such man is the *persona* or manifestation of God. Increase of numbers of such *personae* manifests increasingly the essential unity of the one universal life. In every such attainment the subject has transcended all limits of mere individuality, and has all power in heaven and on earth. Yet, in the transcending and fulfilling of limitations, he includes all limitations, as the universal includes the partial, the unconditioned and absolute all conditions and relations, for nothing can exist apart from relation—every person or thing is the sum of its relations. If Supreme Being does not include personality, and even individual and phenomenal states as such, He is limited or excluded from existing states of human consciousness. "In all afflictions He is afflicted."

A university professor knows, and can teach, the alphabet and can condescend to sympathise with children, because he has transcended and included their state and knowledge.

Christianity is so far in agreement with Pantheism that it acknowledges God as the All of Universal Being; but differs, at least from the lower Pantheism, in affirming fulness of Divine manifestation only in spiritually-perfected manhood. Although I acknowledge no creed as authoritative, I can accept the "Nicene" Creed as expressive of the relation of humanity as a whole, and of every individual member to the in-dwelling Divine nature.

While I certainly should make no inquiry of any spirit or angel concerning God, because the question, Have you seen or heard anything of God? is wrongly put, I do think the "higher Spiritualism," as expressed in the best inspirational poetry, is in accordance with the doctrine have stated. Thus Miss Doten declares the "Inner Mystery" to be that the spirit of man "is older than the truth,"—

"One with God Himself.

Only when the soul asserted

What the flesh and sense concealed.—

God within, one with the Human,

Did the Inner Mystery stand revealed."

Another writer (T. L. Harris) says of a new-born babe—

"Thy beatific essence

Is thought from God's own brow:

Thou in thine innmost hast not left His presence,

Though we behold thee now."

And a Christian poet (Faber), not a Spiritualist, says that—

"God is never so far off

As even to be near;

He is within, our spirit is

That which He holds most dear."

I am glad to find myself in substantial agreement with the thoughts and arguments contained in the able letter of Mr. Humphreys, on "Speculative Philosophy."

August 4th.

J. W. F.

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having been in India; having seen some of the wonderful feats performed by the so-called jugglers of the Orient; believing in the "Brothers" and their exceptional qualifications (in one or two phases, perhaps, of spirit power—*will* power, if you please); having been in Madame Blavatsky's presence when very extraordinary phenomena took place, and having perfect confidence in this lady's honour, great moral worth and exalted qualities of mind and heart, and further having read both of Mr. Sinnett's books ("Occult World," and "Esoteric Buddhism") I feel called upon to make some remarks concerning said works.

Mr. Sinnett says: "Occultism . . . is an illumination cast over all previous spiritual speculations worth anything;" and on the next page, "The startling importance of occult knowledge turns on the manner in which it affords exact and experimental knowledge concerning spiritual things which under all other systems must remain the subject of speculation or blind religious faith."

As above stated, having read Mr. Sinnett's books, I must say that if Occultism has any illumination in it (and I doubt it not), he (Mr. Sinnett) has failed to throw it upon or into his writings, so that the wonderful things to which he refers can any better be seen or understood by a perusal of his productions; and if the "importance of occult knowledge turns on the manner in which it affords exact and experimental knowledge," Mr. Sinnett has not demonstrated this; he merely asserts that such is the fact. What exact experimental knowledge does he impart that makes this appear as a verity?

Again, Mr. Sinnett says: "Secrecy after all is not complete if external. Students are enabled to learn as much about the mysteries as I shall have to tell." And what, pray, are the mysteries he unveils to us? He says that Madame Blavatsky put her hand on a table, on a door, on a glass clock cover and raps came; that writing came on paper in a sealed up envelope, &c. Quite as remarkable things I have witnessed with our spirit-mediums—and more, I have had again and again statements made to me concerning *what was to happen in the future*, and which positively came to pass as the medium had stated it would; and this is a feature in our Spiritualism, the like of which Mr. Sinnett has failed to shew has happened through any occult power of which he claims to be the exponent; and I further solemnly asseverate that the declaration so often made by Eastern Theosophists that we *never receive any communication from the (so-called) spirits which convey information not in possession of the medium or some other person present, is absolutely untrue.*

Again, Mr. Sinnett says, "Occult phenomena must not be confused with the phenomena of Spiritualism. The latter, whatever that may be, are manifestations which mediums can neither control nor understand. The former are achievements of a conscious-living operator comprehending the laws with which he works." Yet, in another place he states, after describing phenomena in Madame Blavatsky's presence, "It was out of her power to give an exact explanation as to how these raps were produced." Which of these assertions shall we accept?

Further, Mr. Sinnett says: "One of the most embarrassing difficulties that beset the present attempt to translate the

occult by *spiritual*.

esoteric doctrine into plain language, is due really to the fact that spiritual perceptiveness, apart from all ordinary processes by which knowledge is acquired, is a great and grand possibility of human nature."

Though this is badly worded, we may perceive by the first part of the sentence what Mr. Sinnett wishes to impart. He really says that the embarrassing difficulties are, that spiritual perceptiveness is a possibility of our nature. If this be a fact, (and it doubtless is a most important one), that spiritual perceptiveness is a possibility with us, it is an agreeable truth and no more "embarrassing" than any other accepted verity.

Mr. Sinnett accuses an English speaking Vakeel of telling a deliberate falsehood (p. 10 "Occult World"). If so wonderful a person as this one he refers to can tell a lie, how can he believe anything that he has heard from others?

"An adept can project his soul out of his body to any place he pleases." One who was not an adept had his soul or double so projected into the presence of Judge Edmonds, of N.Y.

The majority of people, Mr. Sinnett thinks, have a soul, but do not know much about it; whereas "occult philosophy knows the state of facts." If the soul is to hover around, perhaps unconscious in Devachan, or some Karma, for a few millions of years, more or less, it might be agreeable not to know so much about it.

On page 18 Mr. Sinnett says: "St. Paul was an Occultist." Very likely; but how does our author know? Did the English-speaking Vakeel tell him so?

Page 21. "Akaz . . . is as much more subtle an agent than electricity. . . . It is through his acquaintance with the properties of this force that the adept can accomplish the physical phenomena which I shall be able to shew are within his reach, besides others of far greater magnificence." I have failed to discover where Mr. Sinnett has been able to shew anything of the kind, or in any degree make manifest the subtlety of the akasa.

A "Brother," though in Thibet, was "just as able to make the roses fall (from the ceiling) as if he had been in the room with us." (p. 52.) A lady of distinction here saw a large quantity of roses picked, by some invisible agency, in an adjoining conservatory, and presently all thrown upon the table where she was sitting, though the glass doors between her and the conservatory, were closed.

In a scientific and logical point of view Mr. Sinnett's works are very defective,—producing life out of what is non-existing, &c. Of the future, Swedenborg's views are much more rational than those set forth in "Esoteric Buddhism."

With your permission, Mr. Editor, I may refer to this again.

G. L. DITSON, F.T.S.

47, Rue d'Assas, Paris.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Certain minds like "G. W. M. D." and others seem to be unable to understand the esoteric doctrines of Jeshua, and therefore place them in opposition to the esoteric doctrines of Buddha and of other great teachers. I wish, in very short words, to make this clear, and that it is a traditional misinterpretation only that stands in the way of complete harmony. Now, as to the doctrine of Re-incarnation, what find we? When Nicodemus comes to the Master by night seeking instruction, the words of Jeshua were, "Except a man be born again of water and fire (flesh and spirit) he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." To this Nicodemus (whose mind was familiar with the doctrine of metempsychosis then received and prevalent among his brethren) replied: "Shall a man enter again into his mother's womb and be born?" The Master never says: "Thou earnest, not knowing the Scriptures, &c.," but simply reiterates His assertion: "Verily I say unto you except a man be born of the flesh and the Spirit (water and fire) he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. That which is of the flesh is flesh; that which is of the Spirit is spirit." Nicodemus again replies: "How can these things be?" And Jeshua answers: "Why, is it possible you are a teacher in Israel and don't know that? We speak that we know and testify that we have seen" (unlike the orthodox of the present day). Then, as if to remove all doubt to future readers, He adds: "If I have been telling you of physical facts and you do not understand Me, how will you comprehend Me if I go on to tell you of spiritual things?" Can anything be plainer than that the Master here meant to inculcate the grand doctrine of re-births?

Again, when the disciples asked Him, "Master, why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?" Jeshua replies, "Verily Elias is come already, and they have done to him what they listed, for they knew him not. Likewise shall they do unto the Son of Man." To get the force of this "likewise" we have only to refer to His constant teaching "that coming to His own, His own knew Him not, and therefore did not receive Him, and again, had they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Again, it is written that it becometh the Captain of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering many experiences and so we also must be like Him, made perfect through suffering many experiences, and having overcome we "shall not die any more," (what mean these repeated deaths but repeated births?) but "Be made pillars (fixed) in the Temple of God and shall go out and in no

more." What can be clearer than this? Again, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (i.e. perfect) for they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them," (their *Karmas*), by the entire series of which they are judged, not by the deeds of one life only. Again, it is written, "Thou turnest man to destruction and again thou sayest return, ye children of men."

Now as to successive cycles Jeshua teaches that the wicked shall go away into *after corrective chastisement*, and the righteous into *ages of life*. Can any words be plainer, the English translation of which the great revisers have left uncorrected? Why? Again and again we read of the "thousand years" of happiness and of periods of Seven without number, as any reader of the Apocalypse will see.

Once more. In entire ignorance of the teaching of the Catholic Church, which is ever the true, as it is the historical exponent of Christianity, it is asserted by a Spiritualist writer that the Christian Church teaches that there are three Gods—one is God the Father, another God the Son, another God the Spirit! This is monstrous injustice. The Protestant Church may teach such doctrine, but the Catholic Christian Church does not. She distinctly says there are not three Gods, but one God. Now, I will ask the utterer of this slander on Esoteric Christianity, is not he the father as regards his son? is not he the son as regards his father? and is he not the spouse as regards his bride? Are not then these three personalities inherent in him, the one individual?

In the same sense, and in no other, Esoteric Catholic Christianity asserts that God is the Father of Mary, God is the Son of Mary, God is the Spouse of Mary, and yet they are not three, but one God, and Mary, in regenerate humanity, the true Bride of God, the true Maria. That this is so may be clearly seen from the words of the Church in the Sacrifice of the Mass, when the priest blesses the water and wine in the chalice, saying, "Grant that by the mystery of this water and this wine we may be made partakers of His Divine nature who vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature," &c. Here, clearly, the water is a symbol of flesh as it ever was in the Egyptian mysteries, and the wine is symbolic of spirit even as FIRE and AIR, and the mingling of the two in the chalice symbolises the at-one-ment of the human with the Divine. It were well that those who would speak of Esoteric Christianity would first enter into Catholic Christianity, which is the true representative of it, and study her missal and her rites and ceremonies, which veil and enshrine most sacred truths, dear alike to Christian, Buddhist, Vedantist, Jew, and Ancient Pagan; for the basis of all these theologies is one and the same, the lifting up of Humanity to Deity, of the lower nature to the higher, the transformation and transubstantiation of the material into the spiritual.—Yours,

A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

"GENESIS."—By Allan Kardec. A translation of this work, issued by Messrs. Colby and Rich, has reached us just as we go to press. We hope to notice it in an early issue.

QUEBEC HALL.—Mr. J. M. Dale, secretary to the Marylebone Association of Spiritualists, wishes us to state that owing to a dispute between landlord and tenant of the premises at the rear of which Quebec Hall stands, the Marylebone Association is compelled to seek another place of meeting, which will be announced next week. The friends, therefore, will hold their last meetings in this Hall on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Communications for information may be addressed, J. M. Dale, 50, Crawford-street, Bryanston-square, W.

ROCHDALE.—A correspondent says:—We have had a brisk time of it here lately. The last three Sundays we have had open-air meetings in the Town Hall square, and have had numerous, patient, and intelligent audiences, and I have no doubt we have done practical good. There has been opposition, but by only two men, and the audiences have been with us. I have opened the meetings with a few words and afterwards been followed by Mr. Robt. Harper, of Birmingham, or Mr. Wm. Johnson, of Hyde. Mr. Harper fortunately has been two or three weeks in the neighbourhood. Next Sunday Mr. Harper will lecture and also Mr. Johnson. I believe it is only a matter of time and perseverance, and we shall merge into an intelligent and influential society. Private circles are gradually being formed by investigators, and as intelligence comes to them from the unseen, the members seem to find their way to our meetings to obtain information on doubtful matters. If we can double our members, I think we can almost do anything afterwards, as we should then have an income out of which to bring the most efficient teachers in the movement. Of late, in preference to supplying the platform at any cost, we have had social circles to which the public have been admitted, i.e., when speakers could not be judiciously obtained, and I think we have done good. Mr. W. D. Colville will be here on August 22nd, and I would be obliged by your announcement of him in "LIGHT."

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